

CHARLESTON

FIRE DEPARTMENT



Portable Generator Safety

Contact: Community Educator Ryan Kunitzer

Phone: 843-958-6401

E-mail: kunitzerr@charleston-sc.gov

Charleston, SC (October 13, 2015): Citizens and contractors are reminded to use caution with portable generators. Fuel-fired generators provide an easy source of portable power, but basic safety precautions must be observed in order to ensure safe operation

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provides the following basic tips:

- Generators should be operated in well ventilated locations outdoors away from all doors, windows and vent openings.
- Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building.
- Make sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.
- Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is running.
- Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.

It is critical to position generators outside of the home or business due to the carbon monoxide production. Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels burn incompletely. Fuel fired heating and cooking equipment, vehicles, and generators are all examples of potential sources. CO poisoning can be confused with the flu, food poisoning and other illnesses. Some symptoms include nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, light headedness or headaches. High levels of CO can be fatal within minutes. If you believe you are suffering from CO poisoning call 911 immediately and relocate to fresh air.

CO alarms should be installed in homes that are equipped with fuel burning appliances and should be considered in areas that may be exposed to CO on a temporary basis (such as generator use). Alarms should be installed in a central location outside of each sleeping area.

For more information on cooking fires, burn injuries, and smoke alarms, please visit www.charleston-sc.gov/cfd and follow the link to Fire Safety. You can also contact Community Educator Ryan Kunitzer at kunitzerr@charleston-sc.gov or by phone (843)958-6401.

###